

USDA - Agricultural Research Service
Research Capacity Building Sabbatical
Fellowships for Early-Career Faculty at
1890 Land-Grant Universities

FY 2016 Program Information

Application Deadline: November 13, 2015

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United States
Department of
Agriculture

Agricultural
Research
Service

Program Description

The Agricultural Research Service (ARS), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is committed to enhancing the agricultural research capacity of the 1890s Land-Grant Universities (LGUs) by partnering with them in a new program that offers research and training opportunities to early-career tenure-track faculty at 1890 LGUs through the award of sabbatical fellowships. Each Research Capacity Building Sabbatical Fellowship (RCBSF) award will provide up to \$100,000 to support expenses (e.g., salary, living expenses, and research costs) for a Fellow during a 6 to 12-month residence at an ARS laboratory, to conduct cooperative research with ARS. ARS will invest up to \$500,000 each year; no more than one fellowship will be granted per institution per year.

The RCBSF program will provide mutual benefits to the 1890 LGUs and ARS. 1890 LGU faculty will have the opportunity to work alongside ARS scientists in established research programs; develop new skills and techniques for research; co-author research papers from successful collaborative research; and demonstrate increased capacity to develop scientifically competitive research. ARS scientists will benefit from bringing new, talented partners into our research programs and establishing new collaborative work with 1890 LGUs. The LGU-ARS research partners may identify opportunities to develop more long-term funding ideas to sustain their research relationships past the term of the Fellowship.

ARS will accept applications from faculty at any of the 1890s LGUs. A maximum of three applications may be submitted by a given 1890 LGU per competition. The application will be co-authored by:

- A tenure-track 1890 LGU faculty member that:
 - Is within 10 years of having received a Ph.D., and
 - Is approved for a sabbatical leave by his/her home institution, and
- An ARS scientist who:
 - Will be the Fellow's research cooperator and host,
 - Is the Research Leader (RL) of the host unit (although other ARS scientists may participate through their Research Leader) who successfully completed the prescribed probationary period and is in good standing relative to performance,
 - Has adequate facilities and other resources needed to host the 1890 LGU faculty member, and
 - Has worked with the 1890 LGU faculty member to identify a research project that is complementary and relevant to their base funded research.

The ARS is the USDA's chief scientific in-house research agency and is in its 63rd year of conducting research to develop and transfer solutions to agricultural problems of high national priority and provide information access and dissemination to:

- Ensure high-quality, safe food, and other agricultural products;
- Assess the nutritional needs of Americans;
- Sustain a competitive agricultural economy;
- Enhance the natural resource base and the environment and
- Provide economic opportunities for rural citizens, communities, and society as a whole.

ARS' web site (www.ars.usda.gov) is a valuable resource for 1890 LGU scientists in identifying ARS research projects and locations of interest.

Successful applications will:

- Propose innovative research on some aspect of agriculture or food relevant to ARS' mission and programs,
- Have potential benefits and impact for the citizens of the 1890 LGU's state and beyond,
- Strengthen the expertise and research capacity being brought to the project by the 1890 LGU applicant, and
- Enhance the scope or impact of the ARS host scientist's research project.

Funds will be awarded for successful applicants by the addition of funds to the ARS host RL's research project. The host RL will then establish a Non-Assistance Cooperative Agreement (NACA) with the 1890 LGU to finalize the agreement for the full amount of the sabbatical. The sabbatical may not exceed one year in duration.

Sabbaticals must begin no later than June 15, 2016.

Application and Submission Instructions

Applications must be developed jointly by the interested early-career 1890 LGU faculty members and their prospective ARS RL host and submitted by the RL's Area Director. All applications must include the following.

- A 3-5 page application narrative organized according to the following outline:
 1. The objectives of the work to be done by the 1890 LGU faculty member during their sabbatical;
 2. The materials and methods required to accomplish the proposed research;
 3. The resources currently available at the ARS location to support the proposed research;
 4. The expected outputs and impacts of the proposed research;
 5. The benefits of the proposed cooperative research to U.S. agriculture, the 1890 LGU, ARS, and to the parent ARS CRIS project; and
 6. A description of how the sabbatical leave will enhance the capabilities of the applicant including the accomplishment of future research goals.

This narrative should be used as the Statement of Work (SOW) for the NACA with a minimum of alteration.

- A letter from the authorized official of the 1890 LGU that:
 - Grants approval of submission of the application and of the proposed research,
 - Describes the particular arrangements at the 1890 LGU with respect to salary and date and duration of the sabbatical,
 - Recognizes the full-time nature of the sabbatical including that the 1890 LGU faculty member will be doing the research at the ARS location and thus will be minimally engaged in their normal faculty duties,
 - Approves the Cooperator Contributions as listed on the REE-454, and
 - Stipulates that the application is approved as one of no more three applications from the 1890 LGU to this program for FY 2016.
- The Curriculum Vitae of the 1890 LGU faculty member.

- A completed [REE-454](#) budget spreadsheet, which will be used as part of an ensuing NACA.
 - Requested funds may not exceed \$100,000 and can be used to support:
 - The 1890 LGU faculty member's salary and benefits,
 - Travel to and from and residence expenses at the ARS research location,
 - Other travel costs appropriate to the proposed research, and
 - Research costs associated with the proposed research.
 - Funds to be awarded to the 1890 LGU to cover salary, research costs, and other expenses must be listed in the "ARS to Reimburse" column of the REE-454. Note that all research materials to be purchased from sabbatical funds must be purchased by the 1890 LGU.
 - Any additional funds to be supplied by ARS in addition to the sabbatical funds must be listed in the "ARS In-House" column of the REE-454.
 - Budget requirements of 7 CFR 550 for NACAs:
 - Indirect costs are prohibited.
 - The cooperator (the 1890 LGU) must contribute no less than 20 percent of the total resource contributions of the cooperative agreement. The cooperator's contributions may consist of "in-kind" contributions and may also include unrecoverable indirect costs. (See [7 CFR 500.15](#) for more information). These contributions must be listed in the "Cooperator Contributions" column of the ARS-454.

Completed applications must be forwarded by the RL to their Area Office, who will then send all approved applications by email to robert.macdonald@ars.usda.gov.

Application Review and Selection

All applications will be screened to ensure they satisfy the requirements as delineated above. Those that do not will be returned without review.

Applications will be reviewed by a panel composed of the four ARS Office of National Program Deputy Administrators or their designated National Program Leader substitutes. Applications will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Relevance to ARS' mission,
- Ability to further the development of the 1890 LGU early-career faculty applicant,
- Scientific merit of the proposed research, and
- Relevance and utility to the base-funded research of the host RL.

The Administrator of ARS will make the final selection of proposals for funding based on the panel's evaluations.